



FOOD & NUTRITION SERVICES

May 15, 2026

DESE Food and Nutrition Services Staff Updates



The Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) section has experienced several staffing changes this year.

- **Samantha Taggart** is now serving as Coordinator, replacing Barbara Shaw.
- **Darla Hickey** is now in the role of Nutrition Procurement Manager following Kyle Heislen's retirement.
- **Michelle Graziano** is now the new EBT Program Director, replacing Brittany Otto.

Departures

The following have also recently departed:

- Pam Heimericks
- Theresa Dalby
- Debbie Harrison

Current Vacancies

The FNS section is currently in the hiring process for the following positions:

- Nutrition Program Specialist – East Region
- Nutrition Program Specialist – Southeast Region
- Nutrition Program Operations Manager
- EBT Program Specialist
- Program Support Specialist
- Nutrition Provisions Specialist

Here are links to our updated [Region Map](#) and [FNS Contact list](#). Please share these links with other district staff to ensure you are contacting the correct team member in our section. We appreciate your continued support as we work through these transitions. Our team remains committed to ensuring strong program operations and consistent service. We will share updates as positions are filled.



Missouri Farm to School

"Harvest of the Season" Contest

The Missouri Farm to School team is excited to promote our monthly "Harvest of the Season" contest. Awards are being made for local foods served in school meals from January-September.

As part of this contest, districts must share pictures, recipes, and stories of the local food item featured on the menu that month.



Winners will be selected each month and will be awarded a \$1,500 Farm to School mini-grant that can be used directly on allowable Farm to School expenses listed in the application.

On the following link you will find additional information and can also **submit a contest application** for local harvests served in the month of March. **Deadline to submit an application for the month of May is May 31!** Applications will need to be entered monthly for the contest.

If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to Madelyn Terry (Madelyn.terry@dese.mo.gov) or Sierra Walsh (sierra.walsh@dese.mo.gov).

Incorporating Local Beef into Child Nutrition Programs

USDA Food and Nutrition Service is pleased to share the **SP 03-2026, CACFP 02-2026, SFSP 02-2026, Incorporating Local Beef into Child Nutrition Program Meals** memorandum. This memorandum provides helpful resources and strategies for Child Nutrition Program (CNP) operators and ranchers to incorporate local beef into school meals. Resource topics cover procurement, funding resources, food safety, crediting, and technical assistance contacts from the Farm to School Program.

This memorandum is in support of Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins' commitment to American beef and the recently published **USDA Plan to Fortify the American Beef Industry**.

Local Food for Schools (LFS) Grant Funding

LFS funding is still available and schools can be reimbursed for local food purchases through the LFS grant through June 30th, 2026. If you have questions on how to apply or to request additional fund allocations, please reach out to Sierra.Walsh@dese.mo.gov.

Expanding Fluid Milk Options in Child Nutrition Programs

On May 8, 2026, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service published the final rule, **Expanding Fluid Milk Options in Child Nutrition Programs** (91 FR 25073) effective June 8, 2026. This rule expands fluid milk options by allowing operators of the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), and the Special Milk Program (SMP) for Children to offer whole and reduced-fat milk to participants two years and older. This rule codifies milkfat requirements following enactment of the Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act of 2025.

(P.L. 119-69) and supports the statutory requirements for meals to align with the goals of the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2025–2030*. By removing previous fluid milkfat-content restrictions, this deregulatory rule restores flexibility to Program operators, allowing them to offer a greater variety of fluid milk options, including whole and reduced-fat milk, to meet the nutrition needs and preferences of the children and adults they serve.

Questions and Answers:

1.) Question 1: Does this new bill apply to Smart Snacks and the NSLP Afterschool Snack Program?

- **Response 1:** Yes, CNP operators participating in NSLP (including NSLP afterschool snack, the preschool meal pattern, and Smart Snacks), SBP (including the preschool meal pattern), CACFP, and SMP may offer children 2 years and older and adult participants whole, reduced-fat, low-fat, and fat-free fluid milk to meet fluid milk requirements in these Programs. The updated fluid milk requirements for each age group are summarized below:
 - Fluid milk served to children 1 year old must be unflavored whole milk;
 - Fluid milk served to children 2 through 5 years old may be unflavored whole, reduced-fat, low-fat, or fat-free milk; and
 - Fluid milk served to children 6 years and older and adult participants may be unflavored or flavored, whole, reduced-fat, low-fat, or fat-free milk.

2.) Question 2: Does this now apply to the School Breakfast Program (SBP)?

- **Response 2:** Yes, with the newly released "Expanding Fluid Milk Options in the Child Nutrition Programs" Final Rule, whole and reduced fat milk is now permitted in the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, and Special Milk Program.

3.) Question 3: If a parent can now request a fluid milk substitute for a disability, what if they request an energy drink (like Red Bull) or juice? Is that allowable?

- **Response 3:** Under the Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act, a parent or guardian may provide a written statement requesting a reasonable accommodation for a fluid milk substitute for a student with a disability. This statement must follow the same core principles as one provided by a medical professional that identifies the student's impairment and explains how it restricts their diet. The school must accommodate the disability, however, they are not required to provide a specific item, such as a particular non-dairy beverage or juice, if it creates an undue burden. Program operators can use their discretion.

4.) Question 4: If a parent requests (due to disability) for the school to serve juice instead of milk, can the school accommodate that without a medical statement?

- **See Response #3**

5.) Question 5: Are schools required to serve whole milk?

- **Response 5:** No, program operators are not required, but are encouraged to make changes to milk varieties under this provision. Program operators have discretion to decide which varieties of fluid milk to offer. For example, program operators may choose to offer unflavored, whole milk as an option to all program participants to align with recommendations from the Dietary Guidelines to consume full-fat dairy and less added sugars. The revised regulations under this rulemaking give menu planners more flexibility to offer fluid milk options that meet the dietary preferences of program participants and are compatible with product availability, cost considerations, and other local factors.

If you have questions, please reach out to your regional Nutrition Program Specialist ([Map](#)).

Summer 2026 SuN Bucks Info and Resources

If your LEA has already uploaded the completed spreadsheet into Tiered Monitoring – THANK YOU! We are reviewing these as quickly as possible and will contact you if we have any changes or questions. Please submit your spreadsheet as soon as convenient if not already completed.

DESE's Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) team has created several **Summer EBT Student Data Collection resources** to help LEAs complete this required student data collection. LEAs **must** use the **spreadsheet template** to submit this data. Please carefully review the instructional documents that are available either in **PDF** or a **recorded webinar**.

The **Missouri SuN Bucks Program** is a program to help families purchase food for their school-age children during the 2026 summer months of June, July, and August.

School personnel with questions about the data collection process may contact Michelle Graziano at 573-751-7564 or email sebt@dese.mo.gov. Families and other stakeholders with questions about the Missouri SuN Bucks Program should **contact DSS directly** or you can provide them with **SuN Bucks outreach materials**. Families can also use the **Eligibility Navigator** to see if they should apply for Missouri SuN Bucks. Household income requirements must be met to qualify for the program.

FNS Resources, Information & Updates

2026 Summer Food Service Workshops

Summer workshops will be targeted to LEAs receiving an Administrative Review during the 2026-27 school year (SY). Registration will be limited to 2 individuals per LEA. Registration information will be released soon and emailed to Authorized Representatives that are scheduled for a review in the upcoming SY.

If you are not receiving a review in SY 2026-27, you will be directed to register for the fall workshop instead. Additional information coming soon!

2025-2026 Prospective Waiver

Using authority under Section 12(l) of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (NSLA), 42 U.S.C 1760(l), MO DESE was approved for a **SY25-26 prospective waiver** to allow local program operators to quickly respond to unanticipated building closures by providing flexibilities for non-congregate meal service, meal service times, parent/guardian pick up, offer versus serve (NSLP only), meal service at school sites (SSO). With these waivers in place, DESE may approve program operators to serve non-congregate meals for

up to 10 consecutive operating days without prior notice to FNS. Oftentimes, operators experience a short-term disaster/emergency. Examples are flooding, broken pipes, gas leaks, blizzards, school lockdowns for various reasons, building closures, loss of electricity resulting in building closure. All these situations happen very quickly. Without the Prospective waiver you run the risk of not being able to get waiver approval in time to provide the operator the ability to serve and claim meals and they may miss out on reimbursement.

Added Sugar Requirements Question

- **Question:** For the new product based added sugar requirements for cereal, do oatmeal and breakfast bars meet the definition of cereal, therefore needing to meet the added sugar requirement?

Clarification/Guidance

- **Breakfast Bars and Added Sugars-** The regulations at 7 CFR 210.10(c)(2)(iv)(C) points to breakfast cereals individually. However, if breakfast cereal is added to another product or as an ingredient in a recipe, **that breakfast cereal must still meet the product-based added sugar limit.** The product-based added sugar limit would not apply to the entire recipe, only the breakfast cereal. By SY 2027-28, the recipe will be subject to the weekly dietary specification limiting added sugars to less than 10% of calories averaged over the week in the school lunch and breakfast programs.
- This guidance also applies to yogurt used in recipes.
- **Resources:** [Exhibit A: Grain Requirements For Child Nutrition Programs; 7 CFR 210.10\(c\)\(2\)\(iii\)\(B\); Updates to School Nutrition Standards- Added Sugars](#)
- **Does oatmeal meet the requirement?**
 - Breakfast cereals include ready-to-eat, instant, and hot cereals, including oatmeal and granola. These foods are included in the product-based limits for added sugars. These product types are found in the [Exhibit A: Grain Requirements For Child Nutrition Programs](#) in groups H and I, respectively.

Food Service Management Companies (FSMC) and Indirect Costs

An email with more information regarding FSMCs and indirect costs will be emailed soon to FSMC LEAs.

Action for Healthy Kids - NFL Play 60 Champions

Led in partnership by Action for Healthy Kids, GENYOUth, and the NFL Foundation, NFL FLAG-In-School PLAY 60 Champions is a district-level initiative designed to help school districts build on the momentum of NFL FLAG-In-School and create healthier, more active school environments.

While separate from the national NFL FLAG-In-School application, PLAY 60 Champions offers districts additional supports and services to strengthen physical activity efforts across the school

NFL FLAG-In-School PLAY 60 Champions

What is PLAY 60 Champions?



NFL FLAG-In-School PLAY 60 Champions is an NFL-led initiative, powered through partnerships with GENYOUth and Action for Healthy Kids, to help school districts build active, healthy school environments that last—during the school day and beyond.

NFL FLAG-In-School helps spark the movement—then, together, we build what lasts.

NFL FLAG-In-School creates an exciting entry point for schools to get students moving right away. From there, PLAY 60 Champions supports districts with broader, sustained strategies that strengthen daily routines, policies, and practices—so schools can create more active environments year-round.

OUR SHARED GOAL
Every student gets
60 minutes of play
every day.

What GENYOUth + Action for Healthy Kids Provide

GENYOUth (NFL FLAG-In-School activation)

- NFL FLAG-In-School equipment kits
- Curriculum + program resources to support implementation of NFL FLAG-In-School programs
- Tools that help schools launch flag football as an inclusive, engaging physical activity option

Action for Healthy Kids (wraparound supports for active school environments)

- Policy + practice tools to strengthen active school routines and sustainability
- Training + professional learning (webinars, virtual learning, and in-person options with partners)
- Peer learning + implementation support for districts (best-practice sharing, coaching)
- Grants and support opportunities delivered through AFHK's District Impact Network

NFL FLAG-In-School gets students moving—our wraparound supports help schools sustain it.

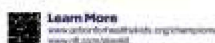
This work supports the five building blocks of a Comprehensive School Physical Activity Program (CSPAP):

- 1 Physical Education (PE)
- 2 Physical Activity During School
- 3 Staff Involvement
- 4 Before/After School
- 5 Family & Community Engagement

Contacts

Learn More (VP) Programs
GENYOUth
learn@nflgenyouth.org

Lead by Graham (Chief Program Officer)
Action for Healthy Kids
graham@actionforhealthykids.org



day and throughout the broader school environment.

Join the **District Impact Network** today to gain access to the NFL FLAG-In-School PLAY 60 Champions application and more.

New Award Opportunity - MoCAN

Missouri School Champion Award

The Missouri Council for Activity & Nutrition (MoCAN) has created the new Missouri School Champion Award. This award will celebrate schools and educators who go above and beyond to support student and staff wellness!

Schools should apply if they have impactful initiatives regarding nutrition, physical activity, or school wellness.

To apply, scan the QR code and nominate your school champion by May 31, 2026.



MISSOURI SCHOOL CHAMPION AWARD

Celebrating schools and educators
who go above and beyond to
support student and staff wellness!



Scan the QR code and nominate your
school champion by May 31st!

Who should be nominated?

- ✓ Schools, districts, or school teams
- ✓ Teachers, administrators, nurses, counselors, or wellness leaders
- ✓ Anyone creating innovative or impactful nutrition and physical activity initiatives

Why nominate a school champion?

- ✓ Gain statewide recognition for your work
- ✓ Share your success as a model for other Missouri schools
- ✓ Highlight the impact you're making on student and staff health
- ✓ Celebrate your team and strengthen your wellness culture

USDA Foods Update



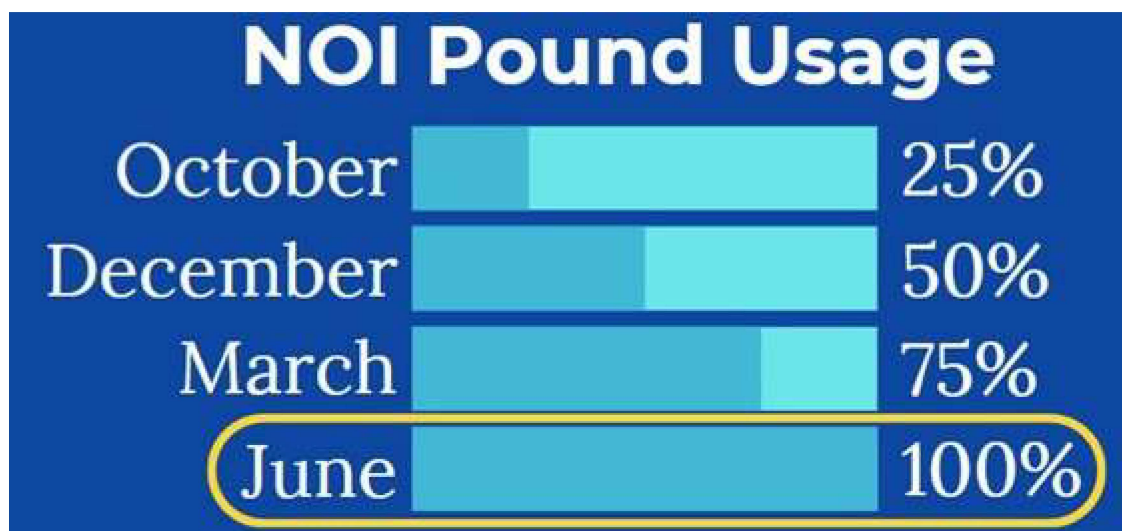
REMINDER!

Receipt items in FFAVORS before you leave for the summer.

DoD Fresh Reminders

Please make sure to receipt your orders in **FFAVORS** before you leave for summer break. Our produce vendor cannot get paid until you receipt your orders. Customers are required to receipt FFAVORS orders **within 2 business days** of delivery (previously 5 business days) before a receipt is considered past due. As before, if past due receipts exist, ordering will be locked until past due receipts are processed.

FFAVORS accounts for next year are in the process of being set up. If you already have an account set up, you will continue to use that one. If you are new to FFAVORS, you will receive an email from SM.FN.FFAVORS@USDA.gov with instructions on how to set up your account. Please keep an eye out for the email and get your account set up so that you will be ready to order at the beginning of next school year.



Net Off Invoice Pounds

Any Net Off Invoice pounds that are not received by June 30th will be swept from the LEA's account. Please make sure to have any Net Off Invoice items delivered by June 30th to count toward this year's entitlement. Districts who have not been utilizing pounds will receive an inquiry from processors asking if you have a plan to utilize your remaining pounds before the end of the school year. Districts with a plan may keep their pounds and continue to draw them down. Districts that do not respond to the processors or that do not have a plan may have their pounds swept into the state account.

Past Newsletters

Missed a past newsletter or need to access them again? You can find them all on our [Food and Nutrition Services Newsletter page!](#)



The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, age, veteran status, mental or physical disability, or any other basis prohibited by statute in its programs and activities. Inquiries related to department programs and to the location of services, activities, and facilities that are accessible by persons with disabilities may be directed to the Jefferson State Office Building, Director of Civil Rights Compliance and MOA Coordinator (Title VI/Title VII/Title IX/504/ADA/ADAAA/Age Act/GINA/USDA Title VI), 7th Floor, 205 Jefferson Street,

P.O. Box 480, Jefferson City, MO 65102-0480; telephone number 573-522-1775 or TTY 800- 735-2966; fax number 573-522-4883; email civilrights@dese.mo.gov.

This email was sent to

Please add to your address book to ensure our emails reach your inbox! If you'd rather not receive emails:

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Report Spam](#)

© Missouri Department of Elementary & Secondary Education, 205 Jefferson Street, Jefferson City, MO 65101